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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/681,413	03/30/2001	Mark E. Lundegren	85ER-00114	3205

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Armstrong Teasdale LLP
One Metropolitan Square
St Louis, MO 63102

01/31/2007

EXAMINER

PORTER, RACHEL L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3626

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	01/31/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/681,413

Applicant(s)

LUNDEGREN, MARK E.

Examiner

Rachel L. Porter

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 June 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 and 38-48 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 38-47 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 and 48 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Notice to Applicant

1. Claims 1-36 and 38-48 are pending. Claims 38-47 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claim 48 is new.

Election/Restrictions

2. Applicant's election with traverse of Group I in the reply filed on 7/14/05 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that there is no serious burden on the examiner to examine both groups and that both groups are related. This is not found persuasive because the Examiner has not asserted that the subcombinations are unrelated. In fact the restriction requirement states that the two inventions are in fact related. However, the detail and claim language of the subject matter found in the two inventions require separate classifications and divergent searches. Because these inventions have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification and because of their recognized divergent subject matter, the requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

3. This application contains claims 38-47 drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse in the response received 7/14/05. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancellation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-4,6,9-10, 11-14,16,19-20,21,23,26-28, 29,31,34-36 and 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlanger (USPAP 2003/02001125) in view of Kraehenbuehl et al (US 2002/0046067).

[claim 1] Erlanger discloses a method of coordinating, by a sponsor, an auction for providing reinsurance for an insurance program of a cedent by a plurality of reinsurers, using a server system coupled to a database and at least one client system, the server and the database are associated with the sponsor (Figure 2; par. 59-68),comprising the steps of:

- establishing a network of participating reinsurers meeting eligibility requirements to participate in said auction; (Figure 5—312, par. 178)
- establishing a reinsurance capacity for each of said participating reinsurers; (par. 181-189)
- receiving at the server said request for reinsurance of the insurance program from the cedent; (Figure 2; par. 180-182)
- performing an underwriting analysis of said request for reinsurance and producing an underwriting report including an analysis of risk of loss associated

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- with said insurance program (par. 183-189), the sponsor performs the underwriting analysis and produces the underwriting report (par. 186,192)
- making said request for reinsurance and said underwriting report available to said participating reinsurers and enabling said participating reinsurers to make respective bids, during a selected period, to reinsure a portion of said insurance program; (par. 191-192)
 - submitting bids using the at least one client system by each of the participating reinsurers after said request for reinsurance and said underwriting report have been made available to the participating reinsurers, (par. 190-192) each bid to include a maximum percentage of reinsurance for said insurance program offered by said participating reinsurer and a rate specified by said participating reinsurer; (par. 193-195)
 - receiving bids at the server from said participating reinsurers during said selection period; (Figures 1-2; par. 192)
 - selecting bids by the sponsor which fulfill said request for reinsurance, as a reinsurance proposal; and (par. 198)
 - offering said reinsurance proposal to said cedent. (par. 198-199)

Erlanger discloses the method of claim 1, substantially as explained above but does not disclose a method further comprising the step of displaying a submission screen.

Kraehenbuehl disclose a method further comprising:

- displaying a submission screen on the at least one client system for prompting a cedent to input a request for reinsurance of an insurance program (Figures 8-9),

the submission screen is stored within the database and is transmitted to the at least one client system (par. 48-49; 70-72), the submission screen including a first section for prompting the cedent to input basic parameters of the request for reinsurance , and a second section for prompting the cedent to respond to questions and attach documents for underwriting the insurance program associated with the request. (Figures 8-9, par. 72-74,76)

At the time of the Applicant's invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Erlanger with the teaching of Kraehenbuehl to include a submission display step. As suggested by Kraehenbuehl, one would have been motivated to include this feature to provide an efficient electronic marketplace to sell and purchase reinsurance, which provides transparency and accessibility. (par. 23-24, 26, and 28)

[claim 2] Erlanger discloses the method as in claim 1 wherein said step of selecting bids for said reinsurance proposal comprises optimizing the bids selected to minimize the cost of said reinsurance proposal to said cedent. (par. 177,181,192—the fees generated by the system help insurers costs down)

[claim 3] Erlanger discloses a method further comprising the step of notifying said participating reinsurers that said sponsor will provide a portion of said reinsurance at a price and percentage to be determined by said sponsor prior to selecting bids for said reinsurance proposal. (par.166-172: a portion of the fees of data system (i.e. sponsor)

are remitted to the insurer/reinsurer and thus provide a portion of insurance/reinsurance)

[claim 4] Erlanger discloses a method further comprising the steps of binding said selected participating reinsurers to provide reinsurance for said insurance program; and guaranteeing, by said sponsor, payment by each of said selected participating reinsurers for any proper claims made for reinsurance of said insurance program. (par. 91, 125, and 134—binding insurers/reinsurers to contractual obligations and the provision of insurance services)

[claim 6] Erlanger discloses a method further comprising the step of adjusting said rate of each bid to include a service charge to be paid by said cedent and collected by said sponsor. (par. 128, 134)

[claim 9] Erlanger discloses a method wherein said reinsurance comprises an agreement to pay claims obligations under an existing insurance program. (par. 37, par. 49)

[claim 10] Erlanger discloses a further comprising the step of determining whether said request for reinsurance meets minimum eligibility requirements for submission of said request to said network of participating reinsurers. (par. 84; 113-116)

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[claim 11] Erlanger discloses a method of coordinating, by a sponsor, an auction for providing insurance for a cedent by a plurality of insurers, comprising the steps of:

- providing a server system associated with the sponsor, the server system coupled to a database; (Figures 1-2; par. 59-60; 66-68)
- providing a plurality of client systems associated with the cedent and the plurality of insurers, the client systems coupled to the server; (Figures 1-2; par. 59-60)
- establishing a network of participating insurers meeting eligibility requirements to participate in said auction; (figure 4—step 301)
- establishing an insurance capacity for each of said participating insurers; (Fig. 4 step –302, par. 84)
- receiving at the server said request for insurance from the cedent; (par. 91-92)
- performing an underwriting analysis of said request for insurance and producing an underwriting report including an analysis of risk of loss associated with said insurance (par. 79-81), the sponsor performs the underwriting analysis and produces the underwriting report (par. 83-84)
- making said request for insurance and said underwriting report available to said participating insurers and enabling said participating insurers to make respective bids, during a selected period, to cover a portion of said insurance; (par. 91-93; par. 178-179) each bid to include a maximum percentage of insurance offered by said participating insurer and a rate specified by said participating insurer; (par. 181-189)

- submitting bids using the at least one client system by each of the participating reinsurers after said request for reinsurance and said underwriting report have been made available to the participating reinsurers, (par. 190-192)
- receiving bids at the server from said participating insurers during said selected period; (par. 192)
- selecting bids by the sponsor which fulfill said request for insurance, as an insurance proposal; and (par. 198, Figure 5)
- offering said insurance proposal to said cedent.(par. 199)

Erlanger discloses the method of claim 11, substantially as explained above but does not disclose a method further comprising the step of displaying a submission screen.

Kraehenbuehl disclose a method further comprising:

- displaying a submission screen on the at least one client system for prompting a cedent to input a request for insurance (Figures 8-9), the submission screen is stored within the database and is transmitted to the at least one client system (par. 48-49; 70-72), the submission screen including a first section for prompting the cedent to input basic parameters of the request for reinsurance , and a second section for prompting the cedent to respond to questions and attach documents for underwriting the insurance program associated with the request. (Figures 8-9, par. 72-74,76)

At the time of the Applicant's invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Erlanger with the teaching of Kraehenbuehl to include a submission display step. As suggested by Kraehenbuehl, one would have

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been motivated to include this feature to provide an efficient electronic marketplace to sell and purchase reinsurance, which provides transparency and accessibility. (par. 23-24, 26, and 28)

[claim 12] Erlanger teaches a wherein said step of selecting bids for said insurance proposal comprises optimizing the bids selected to minimize the cost of said insurance proposal to said cedent. (par. 91, 125—binding insurers/reinsurers)

[claim 13] Erlanger teaches a method further comprising the step of notifying said participating insurers that said sponsor will provide a portion of said insurance at a rate and percentage to be determined by said sponsor prior to selecting bids for said insurance proposal. (par.166-172: a portion of the fees of data system (i.e. sponsor) are remitted to the insurer/reinsurer and thus provide a portion of insurance/reinsurance)

[claim 14] Erlanger teaches a method further comprising the steps of binding said selected participating insurers to provide said insurance; and guaranteeing, by said sponsor, payment by each of said selected participating insurers for any proper claims made on said insurance. (par. 91, 125, and 134—binding insurers/reinsurers to contractual obligations and the provision of insurance services)

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[claim 16] Erlanger teaches a method further comprising the step of adjusting said rate of each bid to include a service charge to be paid by said cedent and collected by said sponsor. (par. 128, 134)

[claim 19] Erlanger teaches a method wherein said insurance comprises an agreement to pay claims obligations under an existing insurance agreement. (par. 37, par. 49)

[claim 20] Erlanger teaches a method further comprising the step of determining whether said request for insurance meets minimum eligibility requirements for submission of said request to said network of participating insurers. (par. 84; 113-116)

[claim 21] Erlanger teaches a process for coordinating, by a sponsor, an auction for providing insurance for a cedent by a plurality of insurers, the process using a computer associated with the sponsor coupled to a remote computer (Figure 2; par. 59-68), said process comprising the steps of:

- establishing a network of participating insurers meeting eligibility requirements to participate in said auction; (figure 4—step 301)
- establishing an insurance capacity for each of said participating insurers; (Fig. 4 step —302, par. 84)
- receiving at the sponsor computer said request for insurance from the cedent; (par. 91-92)

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- performing an underwriting analysis of said request for insurance by the sponsor (par. 183-189)
- producing an underwriting report including an analysis of risk of loss associated with said insurance program (par. 183-189)
- making said request for insurance and underwriting report available to said participating insurers and enabling said participating insurers to make respective bids, during a selected period, to cover a portion of said insurance; (par. 91-93; par. 178-179), each bid to include a maximum percentage of insurance offered by said participating insurer and a rate specified by said participating insurer; (par. 181-189)
- submitting bids using the remote computer by each of the participating insurers after said request and said underwriting report have been made available to the participating insurers, (par. 190-192)
- receiving bids from said participating insurers during said selection period; (par. 192)
- selecting bids which fulfill said request for insurance, as an insurance proposal; (par. 198, Figure 5)
- offering said insurance proposal to said cedent; (par. 199)
- binding said selected participating insurers to provide said insurance; and
- guaranteeing, by said sponsor, payment by each of said selected participating insurers for any proper claims made on said insurance. (par. 91, 125, and 134—

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binding insurers/reinsurers to contractual obligations and the provision of insurance services)

Erlanger discloses the method of claim 21, substantially as explained above but does not disclose a method further comprising the step of displaying a submission screen.

Kraehenbuehl disclose a method further comprising:

- displaying a submission screen on the remote computer for prompting a cedent to input a request for insurance (Figures 8-9), the submission screen is stored at a sponsor computer and is transmitted to the remote computer (par. 46, 48-49; 70-72), the submission screen including a first section for prompting the cedent to input basic parameters of the request for reinsurance , and a second section for prompting the cedent to respond to questions and attach documents for underwriting the insurance associated with the request. (Figures 8-9, par. 72-74,76)

At the time of the Applicant's invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Erlanger with the teaching of Kraehenbuehl to include a submission display step. As suggested by Kraehenbuehl, one would have been motivated to include this feature to provide an efficient electronic marketplace to sell and purchase reinsurance, which provides transparency and accessibility. (par. 23-24, 26, and 28)

[claim 23] Erlanger discloses a method as further comprising the step of adjusting said rate of each bid to include a service charge to be paid by said cedent and collected by said sponsor. (par. 128, 134)

[claim 26] Erlanger teaches a method wherein said step of selecting bids for said insurance proposal comprises optimizing the bids selected to minimize the cost of said insurance proposal to said cedent. (par. 91, 125—binding insurers/reinsurers)

[claim 27] Erlanger teaches a method further comprising the step of notifying said participating insurers that said sponsor will provide a portion of said insurance at a rate and percentage to be determined by said sponsor prior to selecting bids for said insurance proposal. (par. 166-172: a portion of the fees of data system (i.e. sponsor) are remitted to the insurer/reinsurer and thus provide a portion of insurance/reinsurance)

[claim 28] Erlanger discloses a method wherein said insurance comprises an agreement to pay claims obligations under an existing insurance agreement. (par. 37, par. 49)

[claim 29] Erlanger teaches a process for coordinating, by a sponsor, an auction for providing reinsurance for a cedent by a plurality of insurers, the process using a computer associated with the sponsor coupled to plurality of remote computers (Figure 2; par. 59-68), said process comprising the steps of:

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- establishing a network of participating reinsurers meeting eligibility requirements to participate in said auction; (Figure 5—312, par. 178)
- establishing a reinsurance capacity for each of said participating reinsurers; (par. 181-189)
- receiving at said sponsor computer said request for reinsurance from the cedent; (par. 192)
- performing an underwriting analysis of said request for reinsurance by the sponsor (par. 183-189),
- producing an underwriting report including an analysis of risk of loss associated with said reinsurance program (par. 186,192)
- making said request for reinsurance available and said underwriting report to said participating reinsurers and enabling said participating reinsurers to make respective bids, during a selected period, to cover a portion of said reinsurance; (par. 191-192),
- submitting bids using at least one of the remote computers by each of the participating reinsurers after said request for reinsurance and said underwriting report have been made available to the participating reinsurers, (par. 190-192), each bid to include a maximum percentage of reinsurance offered by said participating reinsurer and a rate specified by said participating reinsurer; (par. 181-189)
- receiving bids from said participating reinsurers during said selected period; (par. 193-195)

- selecting bids which fulfill said request for reinsurance, as a reinsurance proposal; (par. 198)
- offering said reinsurance proposal to said cedent; (par. 198-199)
- binding said selected participating reinsurers to provide said reinsurance; and guaranteeing, by said sponsor, payment by each of said selected participating reinsurers for any proper claims made on said reinsurance. (par. 91, 125, and 134—binding insurers/reinsurers to contractual obligations and the provision of insurance services)

Erlanger discloses the method of claim 29, substantially as explained above but does not disclose a method further comprising the step of displaying a submission screen. Kraehenbuehl disclose a method further comprising:

- displaying a submission screen on at least one of the remote computers for prompting a cedent to input a request for reinsurance (Figures 8-9), the submission screen is stored at a sponsor computer and is transmitted to the remote computer (par. 46, 48-49; 70-72), the submission screen including a first section for prompting the cedent to input basic parameters of the request for reinsurance , and a second section for prompting the cedent to respond to questions and attach documents for underwriting the reinsurance associated with the request. (Figures 8-9, par. 72-74,76)

At the time of the Applicant's invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Erlanger with the teaching of Kraehenbuehl to include a submission display step. As suggested by Kraehenbuehl, one would have

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been motivated to include this feature to provide an efficient electronic marketplace to sell and purchase reinsurance, which provides transparency and accessibility. (par. 23-24, 26, and 28)

[claim 31] Erlanger teaches a method further comprising the step of adjusting said rate of each bid to include a service charge to be paid by said cedent and collected by said sponsor. (par. 128, 134)

[claim 34] Erlanger teaches a method wherein said step of selecting bids for said reinsurance proposal comprises optimizing the bids selected to minimize the cost of said reinsurance proposal to said cedent. (par. 91, 125—binding insurers/reinsurers)

[claim 35] Erlanger teaches a method further comprising the step of notifying said participating reinsurers that said sponsor will provide a portion of said reinsurance at a rate and percentage to be determined by said sponsor prior to selecting bids for said reinsurance proposal. (par. 166-172: a portion of the fees of data system (i.e. sponsor) are remitted to the insurer/reinsurer and thus provide a portion of insurance/reinsurance)

[claim 36] Erlanger teaches a method wherein said reinsurance comprises an agreement to pay claims obligations under an existing reinsurance agreement. (par. 37, par. 49)

[claim 48] The limitations of claim 48 are substantially similar to those recited in claims 1, 21, and 29. Insofar as the methods of these claim has been shown to be obvious over the teachings of Erlanger (USPAP 2003/02001125) in view of Kraehenbuehl et al (US 2002/0046067), it is respectfully submitted that the underlying system to perform the method is also obvious over the teachings of Erlanger (USPAP 2003/02001125) in view of Kraehenbuehl et al (US 2002/0046067). Therefore, claim 48 is rejected for the same reasons provided in the rejections of claims 1, 11, 21, and 29, and incorporated herein.

6. Claims 8, 18, 25, and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlanger (USPAP 2003/02001125) and Kraehenbuehl et al (US 2002/0046067) as applied to claims 1, 11, 21, and 29, and in further of in view of Admitted Prior Art (in accordance with MPEP 2144.03 (C)).

[claim 8] Erlanger discloses the method of claim 1 as explained in the rejection of claim 1, but does not expressly disclose a method further comprising, after said step of selecting bids for said reinsurance proposal, the step of allowing a cedent to adjust a percentage of participation of selected and non-selected participating reinsurers within each participating reinsurer's capacity. However, it is respectfully submitted that the use of use of "counteroffers" in a negotiation process is old and well known in the art. At the time of the applicant's invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Erlanger to allow the insurance seeker (e.g. cedant) to adjust the percentage of participation in the bidder's proposal within each bidder's range (i.e. reinsurer's capacity). One would have been motivated to include this feature to

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facilitate the selection process among proposals that may otherwise be equally competitive.

[claim 18] The limitations of claim 18 are substantially similar to claim 8, and are addressed by the rejection of claims 8 and 11.

[claim 25] The limitations of claim 25 are substantially similar to claim 8, and are addressed by the rejection of claims 8 and 21.

[claim 33] The limitations of claim 33 are substantially similar to claim 8, and are addressed by the rejection of claims 8 and 29.

7. Claims 5,7,15,17,22,24,30, and 32 and rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erlanger (USPAP 2003/02001125) and Kraehenbuehl et al (US 2002/0046067) as applied to claims 1,11, 21, and 29 and in further view of Walker et al (USPN 6,119,093).

[claim 5] Erlanger discloses a method for coordinating the auction of insurance through a sponsor as disclosed in the rejection of claim 4, but does not expressly disclose that the method further comprises adjusting bids for credit risk and collecting a credit risk charge against the insuring entity against a possible default. Walker discloses a system/method in which a line of credit and verification of a credit line is

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determined for bidding investors in an insurance syndication system. This credit line may be frozen for a period of time pending any transaction for the syndicated insurance policy (col. 5, lines 9-28—e.g. securing a credit risk charge). At the time of the Applicant invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Erlanger with the teaching of Walker to secure a credit risk charge to protect against defaults from insuring “investing”/bidding parties. As suggested by Walker, one would have been motivated include this feature to add a measure of financial security to the transaction and offset a portion of the risk. (col. 1, lines 25-52)

[claim 7] Erlanger teaches a method of coordinating members of an insurance auction and further discloses binding said selected participating reinsurers/ insurers to provide reinsurance for said insurance program; (par. 91, 125, and 134—binding insurers/reinsurers to contractual obligations and the provision of insurance services).

Erlanger does not disclose:

- collecting premiums from said cedent for said reinsurance and distributing to each of said selected participating reinsurers its share of the premiums collected; and
- processing claims made against said reinsurance, including notifying each said selected participating reinsurers of claims due under said reinsurance, collecting claims payments from each of said selected participating reinsurers, and distributing said claims payments to said cedent.

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Walker discloses a method further comprising collecting premiums from the insured and distributing them to the insuring entity/-ies (Figure 13) and processing claims under the insurance (e.g. reinsurance policy) (Figure 14). At the time of the Applicants invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the method of Erlanger with the teaching of Walker. As suggested by Walker, one would have been motivated to include these features to offer a method by which small insurance syndicates can be more easily created and managed for smaller investors (col. 2, lines 40-44)

[claim 15] The limitations of claim 15 are substantially similar to claim 5 and are addressed by the rejections of claims 5 and 14.

[claim 17] The limitations of claim 17 are substantially similar to claim 7 and are addressed by the rejections of claims 7 and 11.

[claim 22] The limitations of claim 22 are substantially similar to claim 5 and are addressed by the rejections of claims 5 and 21.

[claim 24] The limitations of claim 24 are substantially similar to claim 7 and are addressed by the rejections of claims 7 and 21.

[claim 30] The limitations of claim 30 are substantially similar to claim 5 and are addressed by the rejections of claims 5 and 29.

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[claim 32] The limitations of claim 32 are substantially similar to claim 7 and are addressed by the rejections of claims 7 and 29.

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments filed 6/27/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

(A) Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 21, and 29 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant apparently argues newly added limitations. However a new reference and additional citations have been provided for applicant's consideration.

(B) Applicant traversed the grounds of rejection for claims 8, 18, 25, and 33 which included the Examiner's use of Official Notice.

In response, the Applicant's arguments state that the traversal is based upon the fact that Erlanger does not teach the newly added limitations of claim 11, and that the Official Notice fails to overcome the deficiencies of that rejection. (page 25).

MPEP 2144.03 (C) states the following:

To adequately traverse such a finding, an applicant must specifically point out the supposed errors in the examiner's action, which would include stating why the noticed fact is not considered to be common knowledge or well-known in the art. See 37 CFR 1.111(b).

The same section further states that, "A general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without any reference to the examiner's assertion of official notice would be inadequate." Insofar as Applicant has failed to point out

the specific errors with the noted fact, the Examiner considers the Applicant's challenge to the use of Official Notice to be inadequate. Furthermore, in accordance with MPEP 2144.03, the noted statement is taken to be admitted prior art.

(C) Applicant argues that hindsight has been applied in the rejection of claims 5,7,15,17,22,30, and 32.

In response to applicant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971). In the instant case, the Examiner has provided motivations, from the secondary/tertiary references to support the holding of obviousness.

Conclusion

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rachel L. Porter whose telephone number is (571) 272-6775. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas can be reached on (571) 272-6776. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

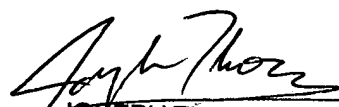
Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER